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Descriptions of new species of Fresh Water Mollusca, from Panama.
By Geo. W. Tryon, Jr.

Description of a new Exotic Melania. By G. W. Tryon, Jr.

Descriptions of new species of fresh water Mollusca, &c. By Geo.
W. Tryon, Jr.

Notes on the Birds of Jamaica. By W. T. March, with remarks,
by S. F. Baird.

On a third kingdom of organized bodies. By T. B. Wilson, M. D.,
and John Cassin.

Descriptions of fourteen new species of Melanidæ and one Paludina.
By Isaac Lea.

May 26th.

The President, MR LEA, in the Chair.

Nineteen members present.

On Report of the respective committees, the two papers of Mr. Lea,
read May 12th, were ordered to be published in the Journal, and the
following were ordered to be published in the Proceedings:

On a Third Kingdom of Organized Beings.

BY THOMAS B. WILSON, M. D., AND JOHN CASSIN.

The classification of the lower forms of organized beings, on the assumption that they ought to be assigned to either the animal or the vegetable kingdom, has presented difficulties to naturalists which have proved insurmountable. The position of entire groups remains, apparently, as uncertain and undetermined in this respect as it ever was, and the conclusions and opinions of authors are so various that it is palpable that no considerable approach has been made to the solution of the questions involved, notwithstanding much very careful and accurate investigation and patient research. The difficulty probably originates in the first assumption, that all organized or living beings are referable to two great groups only, an assumption and presupposition of almost universal prevalence, but in which men of science seem to have been contented to adopt popular belief and to accept the usual and popular application of language. There are, very probably, three kingdoms or great primary groups of organized beings, as distinct from each other as any subordinate groups and as readily defined by valid and recognizable characters.

Whatever may be the solution, ultimately, of the very important questions relating to the primary, and at present unknown, principles under which the normal and inherent forces of Nature first assume that mysterious tension or condition, of which life is the immediate result, it is evident and unmistakable that this extraordinary tension manifests itself and operates under such controlling laws that its results are determinate and uniform. Taking on themselves isolation from the great mass of inorganic Nature, though temporarily only, these forces assume developments which are circumscribed and specific, though evidently progressive and modified under circumstances coincident with and dependent upon the laws or conditions of existence of organic life in any geologic period. It has hitherto been assumed, apparently, that from a point of the first manifestation of life, its progress of evolution or development is into two series or great classes of existences,—animal and vegetable,—or perhaps into one series only, according to the hypotheses of the older authors, regarded as the chain of being, from the lowest vegetable to 1863.]